

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of inspecting an article~~, comprising the steps of:
acquiring a first frame image of a first field of view of ~~said an~~ article;
acquiring a second frame image of a second field of view of said article, wherein said first field of view and said second field of view have an overlap; ~~and~~
inspecting said first frame image and said second frame image;
identifying ~~blemish locations~~ system blemishes, said blemishes having substantially ~~constant frame coordinates~~ identical locations on said first frame image and said second frame image; ~~and~~
masking said system blemishes.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying a first defect location on said first frame image and a second defect location on said second frame image, said first defect location being displaced from said second defect location by a frame displacement that is defined by said overlap, wherein at least one of said first defect location and said second defect location is distinct from any of said blemish locations.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein both of said first defect location and said second defect location are distinct from said blemish locations.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of adjusting said overlap such that said frame displacement is distinct from displacements between members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in a scan direction.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
varying a detection threshold of said first frame image and said second frame image; and
repeating said step of identifying said first defect location on said first frame image and said second defect location on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.
6. (Original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
applying a super-resolution technique to said first frame image and said second frame image; and
repeating said step of identifying said first defect location on said first frame image and said second defect location on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.
7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said steps of acquiring said first frame image and acquiring said second frame image are performed by impinging pulsed coherent light on said article.
8. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein a focal plane of said first frame image differs from a focal plane of said second frame image.
9. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said overlap of said first field of view and said second field of view is oriented in a scan direction.
10. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said overlap of said first field of view and said second field of view is oriented orthogonal to a scan direction.
11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said overlap is at least 50% of an area of said first frame image.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of inspecting an article employing an optical imaging system, comprising the steps of:

- preparing a pre-scan mask of blemishes of said optical imaging system;
- determining blemish displacements between pairs of said blemishes that are aligned in a scan direction;
- selecting a frame overlap of consecutive image frames of said article that is distinct from all of said blemish displacements;
- acquiring a first frame image and acquiring a second frame image of said article that overlaps said first frame image at said frame overlap; and
- masking said first frame image and said second frame image with said pre-scan mask.

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of identifying a first defect location on said first frame image and a second defect location on said second frame image, said first defect location being displaced from said second defect location by a frame displacement that is defined by said frame overlap between said first frame image and said second frame image, wherein at least one of said first defect location and said second defect location is distinct from any of said blemishes on said pre-scan mask.

14. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

- varying a detection threshold of said first frame image and said second frame image; and
- repeating said step of identifying said first defect location on said first frame image and said second defect location on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.

15. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

- applying a super-resolution technique to said first frame image and said second frame image; and

repeating said step of identifying said first defect location on said first frame image and said second defect location on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.

16. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12, wherein said steps of acquiring said first frame image and acquiring said second frame image are performed by impinging pulsed coherent light on said article.

17. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12, wherein a focal plane of said first frame image differs from a focal plane of said second frame image.

18. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12, wherein said frame overlap is oriented in said scan direction.

19. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12, wherein said frame overlap is oriented orthogonal to said scan direction.

20 - 24. (Cancelled)

25. (Withdrawn) A method of inspecting an article, comprising the steps of:

- directing a beam from said article through optics along a plurality of optical paths;
- disposing a first camera in one of said optical paths, said first camera having a first field of view of said article and a second camera in another of said optical paths, said second camera having a second field of view of said article, wherein said first field of view and said second field of view have an overlap;

- acquiring a first frame image of said article with said first camera, and acquiring a second frame image of said article with said second camera;

- identifying blemish locations having substantially constant frame coordinates on said first frame image and said second frame image; and

- identifying a defect in said first frame image and in said second frame image, wherein a frame displacement of said defect corresponds to said overlap, and wherein a

location of said defect on at least one of said first frame image and said second frame image avoids said frame coordinates of said blemish locations thereon.

26. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein frame coordinates of said defect on said first frame image and on said second frame image are distinct from said blemish locations.

27. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, further comprising the step of adjusting said overlap such that said frame displacement is unequal to any displacement between members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in a scan direction.

28. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein said overlap is at least 50% of an area of said first frame image.

29. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, further comprising the steps of:
varying a detection threshold of said first frame image and said second frame image; and
repeating said step of identifying a defect on said first frame image and on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.

30. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, further comprising the steps of:
applying a super-resolution technique to said first frame image and said second frame image; and
repeating said step of identifying a defect on said first frame image and on said second frame image, so as to identify all defect locations on said article.

31. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein said steps of acquiring said first frame image and acquiring said second frame image are performed by impinging pulsed coherent light on said article.

32. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein a focal plane of said first camera differs from a focal plane of said second camera.

33. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein said overlap of said first field of view and said second field of view is oriented in a scan direction.

34. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 25, wherein said overlap of said first field of view and said second field of view is oriented orthogonal to a scan direction.

35 - 46. (Cancelled)

47. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of inspecting an article~~, comprising the steps of:
disposing a plurality of image sensors to image ~~said an article~~; ~~and~~
acquiring images of the article, by directing a collection beam from a surface of said article under inspection onto said image sensors, in a first configuration in which all said image sensors have a common field of view, and in a second configuration in which said image sensors have different fields of view comprising a first field of view and a second field of view; and
inspecting the images.

48. (Original) The method according to claim 47, wherein said collection beam is directed onto said image sensors with equal fluence.

49. (Original) The method according to claim 47, wherein three said image sensors are disposed, and said collection beam is directed toward said image sensors by two mirrors.

50. (Original) The method according to claim 47, wherein in said first configuration said image sensors are focused on different planes relative to said surface of said article.

51. (Original) The method according to claim 47, wherein in said second configuration said first field of view has an overlap with said second field of view.

52. (Original) The method according to claim 51, wherein said overlap exceeds 50 per cent, wherein a frame displacement between said first field of view and said second field of view is distinct from displacements between members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in a scan direction.

53. (Original) The method according to claim 47, further comprising the step of disposing at least one beam splitter in said collection beam for directing at least portions of said collection beam toward said image sensors, respectively.

54. (Original) The method according to claim 53, wherein said beam splitter comprises two beam splitters, and said image sensors comprise three image sensors.

55. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 53, further comprising the steps of:

disposing a mirror in said collection beam, and disposing a beam blocking means so as to block a portion of said collection beam from reaching said mirror;

displacing said beam blocking means and said beam splitter between operating positions and non-operating positions;

scanning said article ~~is scanned~~ relative to said image sensors in a scan direction; wherein;

in said first configuration said beam blocking means is interposed so as to block said portion of said collection beam, and said beam splitter is disposed within said collection beam; and

~~wherein~~ in said second configuration said beam blocking means and said beam splitter are displaced external to said collection beam, and ~~wherein~~

said first field of view and said second field of view have an overlap, and a frame displacement between said first field of view and said second field of view is distinct from displacements between members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in said scan direction.

56. (Original) The method according to claim 55, wherein said overlap exceeds 50 per cent in said scan direction, wherein said frame displacement is distinct from displacements between said members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in said scan direction.

57. (Original) The method according to claim 55, wherein said overlap exceeds 50 per cent in an orthogonal direction to said scan direction, wherein said frame displacement in said orthogonal direction is distinct from displacements between said members of pairs of system blemishes that are aligned in said orthogonal direction.

58. (Original) The method according to claim 55, wherein in said first configuration said image sensors are focused on different planes relative to said surface of said article.